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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [PINR](#) [MD](#)  
SUBJECT: Ambassador Presses Senior Presidential  
Advisor on NDI Harassment

Classified by Ambassador Asif J. Chaudhry under  
1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a December 8 meeting, Ambassador Chaudhry pressed senior presidential advisor Sergiu Stati to end GOM harassment and renew the work and residence permit of National Democratic Institute (NDI) Country Director Alex Grigorievs. Stati said the issue would be solved in a few days. He also described the generally good bilateral relations with Ukraine, while noting that Ukrainian intra-governmental disputes and Russian interference prevented positive steps on Transnistria and the Novodnestrovsk Dam dispute. End summary.

GOM Failure to Renew NDI Director's Permit  
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¶2. (C) The Ambassador told Stati how often he had expressed to EU ambassadors his support for Moldova's European integration. The best way for Moldova to prove its readiness, the Ambassador declared, was for Moldova to behave democratically in preparations for and execution of its 2009 parliamentary elections. The Ambassador expressed concerns about GOM restrictions on the mass media. He also noted that Moldova, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (MFAEI), had come under criticism, in Washington and in EU capitals, for the MFAEI's failure to renew Grigorievs's work/residence permit ("legitimatie"), which expired in September. (Grigorievs was present in Moldova on a 90-day tourist visa from September 5, and left the country on December 5. He returned to Chisinau on a flight from Riga on December 13, without incident.)

¶3. (C) The Ambassador described a series of broken promises and implausible excuses, including several received from the MFAEI, that authorization was approved but the machine was broken, followed by a statement that the machine was fixed but authorization was delayed. The Ambassador further noted that he had raised the issue with the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister, and asked whether it was logical that such a minor, technical issue should have to be raised at such a high level. Stati replied that it was a technical matter, and threw up his hands in embarrassed agreement that this sort of issue should not be wasting the time of officials at his and the Ambassador's level. Stati said that he had talked to Foreign Minister Stratan last week, when he first became aware of the issue, and noted that "we see NDI activities as beneficial." However, despite the Ambassador's warning that he

had a forceful letter prepared for President Voronin in case the legitimatie was not renewed, the best commitment that Stati could offer was that the issue would be solved in a few days.

#### Stati's Views on Issues Hindering Ukraine

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14. (C) On Ukraine, where he had served until October as Moldova's Ambassador, Stati noted that Moldova and Ukraine had proved that it was possible for two countries in the neighborhood to have good relations. He cited as a success the recent decision to extend the mandate of the European Union Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM). However, he noted, current tensions between the Ukrainian President and Prime Minister have prevented action in other areas. Stati believed that Ukraine wanted to help solve the Transnistria dispute and the dispute over the Novodnestrovsk hydroelectric plant, but that the government was so divided over personalities that issues could be resolved. (Note: The power plant, started in the 1980s, is situated on both banks of the Dniester. Moldova rejects Ukraine's claim that it owns the portion on Moldova's side of the river. Ukraine has asked Moldova to cede six hectares of its territory, an act that Stati described as constitutionally impossible. End note.)

15. (C) On Ukraine's role in Transnistria talks, Stati said that, in addition to divisions in Kyiv,

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Russian anger over Ukraine's overtures to NATO had a restraining effect on Ukraine's capacity to play an active role in five-plus-two talks. Stati also noted that Moldova was considering its response to Transnistrian "President" Smirnov's offer of a meeting with President Voronin in Tiraspol on December 11, but wary of Smirnov's ability to turn such meetings into a "show" before a media audience restricted to reporters from Russia and Transnistria only. (Note: the GOM subsequently rejected Smirnov's request for a meeting. End note.)

Comment

16. (C) Comment: Stati was far more comfortable discussing the divisions in the Government of Ukraine than he was listening to the Ambassador's forceful advocacy of Moldova's need to conform to its European aspirations, and not embarrass itself further with harassment of NDI and its country director. We hope that the issue will be solved soon. (Grigorievs's return on Saturday is only a temporary solution.) After the GOM's discussions this past summer about expelling NDI and IRI from the country, we want to make sure that it does not use this expired document as an excuse to expel Grigorievs, and perhaps eject NDI from the country. We are prepared to take the issue to the President if Grigorievs's legitimatie is not issued, as Stati promised.

Chaudhry